

February 12, 2015

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

A Transportation Committee meeting was held on Thursday, February 12, at 6:00 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court Meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: Curry, Anglin, K. Harrison, Adams, Meyers, Moore

Others Present: JPs Easley, Sandlin, Leadabrand, Moehring, Administrator of Public Services Jeff Clark, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Centerton City Mayor Bill Edwards

Media: Tom Sissom

JP Curry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **Benton County 2015 Road Plan – Update**

Administrator of Public Services Jeff Clark stated that the work being done on Sugar Creek road is to repair damages from the 2013 flooding in that area. He reported that the road work being done is part of the FEMA work from 2013 and part is the Benton County Road Department's 2015 Road Plan. He stated that a majority of the roads are connector roads and that they are planning on three projects with a price tag of \$779,340 and these will be state-aid projects. He reported that the county has another \$2.2 million in paving work and that if all of the projects are done, the county will be paving 53.8 miles of roads next year.

Further lengthy discussion was held on the Sugar Creek road work and the Benton County Road Department's 2015 Road Plan.

### **War Eagle Bridge Structural Deficiencies**

Jeff Clark stated that Judge Clinard hosted a public meeting on the War Eagle Bridge Saturday at the visitor's center at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area that drew about 100 people interested in saving the bridge. He stated that the county has two options; (1) close the bridge and abandon it, at which point ownership of the bridge would revert to the property owners on the site or, (2) build a bridge nearby and bypass the War Eagle Bridge for vehicle traffic. He added that from the historical side, they are exploring every option before they can make any type of decision.

Further lengthy discussion was held to repair or replace the War Eagle Bridge and the two options available.

### **Update - Bentonville West High School Roads and Infrastructure Project**

Rick Hudson, Centerton Street Superintendent explained the city's work plan for the Bentonville West High School roads, which is now underway. He stated that school is going to open next fall and we are on a very tight time line.

Jeff Clark stated that the county wants to wait until the bulk of the construction work is done to minimize damage to the roads from heavy trucks and other construction activity. He stated that the money will be proposed in the 2016 budget and it will take approximately 1½ to 2 months to do the work. He stated that heavy truck traffic from the construction site could damage that work.

Bentonville School Facilities Director Paul Wallace stated that the school district pressed for a traffic study in hopes of getting the work done as quickly as possible. Rick Hudson reported that the state has agreed to move ahead with some improvements based on the traffic study, but has held off on other work. Mr. Wallace stated that he is a little nervous about getting all of the work completed in advance of the school's opening.

After further lengthy discussion on the work to be completed in advance of the school's opening, JP Moehring stated that he would like for all of the entities involved to have a plan that they are all confident with, in regard to how this is going to be done when the buses and kids roll. Jeff Clark stated that they have a plan, and it is in the budget, but the timing has been an issue.

Centerton City Mayor Bill Edwards stated that the school is only 18 months away from opening and that is really not that long. He stated that they did spend the money on the traffic study and the traffic study tells us what the plan is. He stated that we need to look at doing some more of the work this year instead of 2016.

JP Adams suggested that the county contract the work it plans to do around the school, even though it will increase the cost. He stated it is more expensive to contract out this mile of road, but it is just one mile of road. He stated that they could be done with the work by this fall.

Jeff Clark stated that the estimated road work will cost about \$640,000 if done by the county and around \$1 million if contracted out.

A straw poll of the justices of the peace supported the idea of speeding up the work.

JP Curry asked Jeff Clark to work with County Judge Bob Clinard on the option of speeding up the work and to bring this information to the February 26, 2015 Quorum Court meeting. He stated that he wanted everybody to hear the plan.

### **Public Comments**

Several residents from the Sugar Creek Road area expressed their concerns about the paving work that is being done on Sugar Creek Road and how it would lead to an increase in traffic on a road that they use for farm equipment.

Other residents of the area objected to the improvements that might increase the value of their property and raise property taxes.

JP Curry stated that he would discuss the residents' concerns with Judge Clinard and with Jeff Clark and that if the majority does not want this work to be done, we can re-allocate those funds. He stated that in District #11, there are a lot of people who would like to have blacktop roads. He suggested that the residents talk with JP Easley of District #1 and organize a town hall meeting to give them additional time to express their opinions.

### **Adjournment**

After motion and second the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.